

Massachusetts OHV Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting name	OHV Advisory Committee – subcommittee on outreach and education		
Date	8-7-13	Time	2:00 – 3:00 PM
Location	EEA, Boston	Meeting host	Celia Riechel (EEA)
Committee members present			
Stephanie Cooper (EEA)	Colleen McGuire (DPH)	Capt. Merri Walker (OLE)	Celia Riechel (EEA)
Guests			
Courtney Livingston (OLE)			
Committee members absent			
Col. Chris Baker (OLE)	Tad Ames (Berkshire Natural Resources Council)	Sharon Jordan (MA Forest & Parks Friends Network)	Gary Briere (DCR)
Ken Anderson (Mass ATV)	Dan D’Arcy (Power Sport Dealers Association)	Katie Kearney (Child Safety Advocate)	Chief Ernest Horn (Mendon Department of Public Safety)
VACANT– rep. of non-profit organization that owns and manages land open to the public	VACANT – rep. of OHV users and rep. of New England Trail Riders Association	VACANT – rep. of OHV users	Randy Toth (Snowmobile Association of MA)
Chris Mossman (MA Forest Landowners Association)			

Synopsis of items discussed

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Who are the target audiences?

How well are we reaching them?

What do we want them to do?

Why aren't they doing it now?

We've tried these general efforts, like the outreach letter, at reaching organizations and people with the message about the OHV law and safety. Looking through various organizations' websites, it doesn't look like many (or any) have taken the step to put something on their website. But you could ask whether even if they did put something—a link or a little note about OHV safety—on their website, if people would actually follow the link, or if that would actually be effective in getting information to those who don't currently have it, or increasing the percentage of riders who comply with the training, safety, and registration requirements.

We've identified a number of key groups that we need to reach. The way we reach them and the message we use should be tailored to address their interests.

Municipal police: The lack of enforcement by municipal police continues to be a concern. State environmental police officers have very large geographic regions to cover, and they cannot effectively enforce the law by themselves. At the last meeting, it was pointed out that while the municipal police academy could add the OHV law into their training curriculum that is offered to new police trainees as well as continuing education for current officers. This may be challenging because training time is limited and departments can't afford to send their officers away for extra training. An online training module or film that can be distributed to departments across the state and viewed or completed as officers have time, without leaving their departments, could help give more officers a basic understanding of the law. The Environmental Police can produce the training material, including information from DPH on injuries.

The other major hurdle to municipal enforcement is lack of incentive. Most do know about the law, but because they have limited financial and personnel resources, are choosing to focus on other activities. Establishing a link between enforcement of the law and receipt of a portion of the fine money could be significantly motivate police to increase enforcement efforts. Chief Horn has previously mentioned the possibility of establishing dedicated law enforcement accounts at the municipal level to receive these fine revenues. The funds in the account could be used for law enforcement activities at the discretion of the police chief. We can't expect municipalities to figure out how to do this on their own, nor can we expect them to advocate with the state court system to make sure their due portion of fines is properly deposited in their account. EEA and Environmental Police will find out the procedure for getting fines returned to issuing municipalities, and also develop a model legislation or bylaw to set up the dedicated law enforcement account.

Schools: School resource officers could be a good point of access to kids. While not all

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schools have them, many do, especially the larger schools. The Environmental Police will contact resource officers.

School nurses are another point of contact especially from the safety side of the conversation. They are already heavily involved in conversations about concussions in sports. DPH is participating in an upcoming school nurse conference, and will propose kids and OHV safety as a topic.

There are other opportunities for conveniently packaged information to be given to kids through schools. Most have some form of morning or afternoon announcements, for which the committee could create some simple information on the law and safety.

We could also pick a few schools or districts to try more involved outreach methods, to find out what is most effective.

Dealers: This group is critical to reach, but they have an inherent conflict of interest because proper adherence to the law would limit their customer base and increase the expense of riding. But, we shouldn't assume they are just ignoring the law. Maybe we're missing something that makes it hard for them to inform people about the law. We can start by just asking them what they think is the best way to reach the public and get compliance. We can get them invested in the process, and then maybe they will be more helpful. Environmental Police will ask a few dealers how they think they might help. Maybe some sort of rebate—there is a \$100 rebate offered by some manufacturers if people take the ASI course; we should try to do something similar.

Kid organizations: We can more directly contact groups like the Boy Scouts, 4H, etc. to offer training to their kids, as well as have a presence at fairs.

Next steps/action items

1. Produce OHV training film or online course for distribution to municipal police departments. (Courtney Livingston, Merri Walker)
Injury statistics to be included will be sent by Colleen McGuire.
2. Determine what legislation is necessary to allow local towns to set up a dedicated fund for OHV fines. Find an existing town to be used as a model, or create one. (Stephanie Cooper, Merri Walker)
3. Propose OHV law and child safety as a topic at school nurses' conference (Colleen McGuire)
4. Create outreach materials to be read at school announcements or handouts to be sent home to parents (Courtney Livingston)
5. Ask dealers how they think compliance could be increased, and how they could help. (Courtney Livingston)
6. Find out if we can get manufacturers to offer a \$ rebate to customers who take the training course. (Merri Walker)